



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**Family
Independence
Agency**

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DOUGLAS E. HOWARD, Director

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Michigan's welfare reform efforts have provided incentives for public assistance families to seek and gain employment, and support services when they join the workforce, to help them achieve independence from the welfare system.

Nine years ago, 15.7 percent of our customers worked; today, 66 percent work. Our caseload has declined nearly 70 percent over eight years; since 1992, almost 295,000 cases have closed due to earnings. The statistics show we're on the right track, but there's more work ahead.

Next year, Congress debates reauthorization of current welfare policies. They should link more programs to the work principle and reduce bureaucratic burdens on the states by:

- aligning inconsistent requirements among programs,
- allowing states additional flexibility,
- focusing more on job retention and advancement,
- and maintaining adequate federal funding levels.

The states have led the way. Washington should consider our successful efforts as the debate on welfare reform continues.

Douglas E. Howard, Director
Michigan Family Independence Agency



JOHN ENGLER, Governor